

## REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Applicant acknowledges, with thanks, the office action dated May 14, 2008 and personal interview completed on July 9, 2008. The Examiner's suggestions and observations are much appreciated and summarized herein. The Examiner's consideration of Applicant's arguments filed April 13, 2008, is noted with appreciation. Claims 1, 3-8, 10-15, 17-22, and 24-28 are currently pending.

Claims 1, 3-8, 10-15, 17-22, and 24-28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0147668 Smith et al. (*hereinafter*, "Smith") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,216,113 to Aikens (*hereinafter*, "Aikens"). In view of the amendments and arguments set forth below, it is submitted that all pending claims are patentably distinct over the art of record.

The subject application is directed to a system and method for automated accounting of document generating device usage comprising a plurality of document generating devices. Usage data representative of usage of a document generating device is acquired in accordance with a selected one of a plurality of user accounts, wherein the usage data includes at least one of copier usage data, print usage data, facsimile usage data, and scanning usage data. Report period data corresponding to a selected timing for transmission of accumulated usage data is received from an accounting administrator via a data network. Accumulated usage data from each of a plurality of document generating device operations is locally stored, and received report period data is also locally stored. Elapsed time is calculated via a timer and the usage data is periodically outputted to an associated accounting administrator in accordance with the report period data and the elapsed time. A reset signal representative of a reset of at least a portion of accumulated usage data is received from the associated accounting administrator via the data network, and locally stored accumulated usage data is reset to a previous state upon receipt of a reset signal.

As discussed during the Interview, Smith is directed to a job-based accounting system. The system includes a description wherein an application suitably engages in transactions to debit or credit various accounts automatically at various intervals. Thus, a user can initiate an account action via a software application and complete transactions such as bill payment. Conversely, the subject application teaches a system and method wherein document processing

job accounting information is stored on individual devices, such as a copier, printer, facsimile machine or multifunction peripheral. An administrator sets a time when the particular device will automatically report or push its accounting information. An administrator suitably sets reporting intervals. The administrator is also enabled for clearing all or some of the data from the individual devices which allows for clearing of information once the administrator has determined that all needed information has been retrieved. The subject teachings advantageously allow for accumulation of usage information on each of a plurality of networked devices. Reporting times are set by an administrator, and are advantageously set to accomplish benefits of staggered network congestion, timing to avoid peak device usage periods, and the like. This is far removed from the data operation initiated by an administrative application such as disclosed by Smith.

Aikins is directed to an auditron and is cited as disclosing data representative of copies, prints or facsimiles made. However, Aikins is directed to a system that accumulates information locally or pushes it directly to another terminal as it is obtained. Thus, Aikins teaches a system that suffers from the problems addressed by the teachings of the subject application.

Amendment to each of independent claims 1, 8 and 15 has been made to render more clear the novel distinctions discussed over the art of record. As amended, each claim now includes limitations wherein device usage information is accumulated locally, and reported in connection with a timer and timing specified by an administrator. A reset signal allows for deletion by an administrator of some or all of the accumulated information, providing advantages such as only deleting accounting information after an administrator has determined that all needed data has been successfully reported. Thus, the system further teaches a mechanism by which possible system or network failures which may have prevented accurate, automated reporting will not result in automatic deletion of important information. The network administrator will initiate such a deletion once he or she has determined that the automated reporting is acceptable.

In accordance with the afore-noted amendments and comments, it is submitted that all claims are patentably distinct over the art, and in condition for allowance thereover. An early allowance of all claims is respectfully requested.

If there are any fees necessitated by the foregoing communication, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge such fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0902, referencing our Docket No. 66329/31337.

Respectfully submitted,

Date:

7/21/08



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